

2008-2009 ANNUAL WATER MANAGEMENT PLAN

RED RIVER NWR

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2008-2009

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BAYOU PIERRE UNIT: YATES TRACT MOIST SOIL UNITS

Moist soil units in the Yates Tract of Bayou Pierre have been unmanaged for several years resulting in undesirable plant species growing uncontrollably. Prior to the Service retaining the property, it was managed for rice and had a healthy waterfowl and wading bird population.

Unit Name: Yates; MS Unit 1

Acres: 66

Summary: 2007-2008

Unit 1 has 3 stand pipes on the West border that allow for drainage. The water valve is located in the Southeast corner of the unit. In 2007, the stand pipes were left in allowing rain water to collect. There was no monitoring program at that time. A slow drain was implemented, from March through June 2008, by removing one pipe at a time. This resulted in a mud flat on the Eastern border. However, only a few wading birds utilized this area due to the excessive amounts of vegetation but no waterfowl. During October 2008, the unit was mowed removing a majority of vegetation, only leaving larger trees.

Vegetation: 2007-2008

The unit was predominantly cattails, willows, cottonwood and green ash. There was minimal food species.

Proposed Management Summary for 2009 - 2010

APRIL 1 - MAY 15	Slow complete draw-down to expose for shorebirds
MAY 15 - JULY 1	Mowing, disking, remove large trees
JULY 1 - OCT 15	Slow flood

To reduce the possibility of unwanted vegetation reaching prior levels, stand pipes will be replaced to catch rain water and potentially pump water into the unit. A complete early drawdown will begin in April to allow for shorebird habitat. The unit will be allowed to dry for disking and removal of the larger trees, (summer disking). After the ground has cracked and seeds have germinated, an early flood, beginning around late Aug. 2009, with a continuous increase in flooding will promote late fall/early winter waterfowl.

Unit Name: Yates; MS Unit 2

Acres: 46

Summary: 2007-2008

Unit 2 has one ½ pipe structure for drainage located in the Southeast corner. The water valve is located in the Northeast corner of the unit. In 2007, boards were left in allowing rain water to collect. There was no monitoring program at that

time. A slow drain was implemented, from March through June 2008, by removing one board at a time. This resulted in a mud flat on the Eastern border. There were many wading birds that utilized the area near the drainage structure but minimal waterfowl usage. During October 2008, the unit was mowed removing a majority of vegetation, only leaving larger trees.

There was some beaver activity affecting the drainage structure. In April 2008, efforts to remove the beaver dam allowed unit to drain. Boards were replaced in Nov. 2008 to catch rain water.

Vegetation: 2007-2008

The vegetation was predominantly large willows, green ash, and cottonwood trees with a heavy cattail ground cover.

Proposed Management Summary for 2009 - 2010

APRIL 1 - MAY 15	Slow complete draw-down to expose for shorebirds
MAY 15 - JULY 1	Mowing, disking
JULY 1 - OCT 15	Slow flood

A complete early drawdown in April will allow for shorebird habitat. Unit will be allowed to dry for disking and removal of the larger trees, (summer disking). After the ground has cracked and plants have germinated, an early flood, beginning around late Aug. 2009, with a continuous increase in flooding will promote late fall/early winter waterfowl.

Unit Name: Yates; MS Unit 3

Acres: 34

Summary: 2007-2008

Unit 3 has 4 stand pipe structures for drainage located along the Western boarder. The water valve is located in the Northeast corner of the unit. In 2007, stand pipes were left in allowing rain water to collect. There was no monitoring program at that time. A slow drain was implemented, from March through July 2008, by removing one stand pipe at a time. This unit was utilized mainly by American coots with minimal wading bird usage. During July 2008, the unit was mowed, trees were removed and placed in piles, and the rice levees were removed.

Standpipes were replaced on Aug. 28, 2008 to begin catching rain water and began actively pumping water into unit 3 on Oct. 7, 2008. On Nov. 3, 2008, beaver activity was encountered at one of the stand pipes. No attempt to remove debris from the standpipe was made. The beaver activity assisted in holding water and removing it would have resulted in loss of water. This problem will be addressed during the Spring 2009 drain down. This unit was considered full on

Nov. 12, 2008 and monitoring will continue throughout the winter.

Vegetation: 2007-2008

The vegetation was predominantly cattail and large willows with fairly large open areas that had minimal food production.

Proposed Management Summary for 2009 - 2010

MAY 15 - JULY 1	Slow draw-down to expose for shorebirds
JULY 1 - OCT 15	Mowing, disking
OCT 15 - APR 1	Slow flood

First priority for this unit will be the removal of debris from a standpipe caused by beaver activity during the fall of 2008. A slow drain will begin in May 2009 with a complete draw down in the summer to allow soil to dry for disking and vegetation germination. A shallow flood will begin around Oct. 2009, increasing throughout Dec. 2009 until a preferred water depth of 2.3 ft. is reached.

Unit Name: Yates; MS Unit 4

Acres: 63

Summary: 2007-2008

Unit 4 has 3 stand pipes on the East border that allow for drainage. The water valve is located in the Southwest corner of the unit. In 2007, the stand pipes were left in allowing rain water to collect. There was no monitoring program at that time. A slow drain was implemented, from March through July 2008, by removing one pipe at a time. A fairly descent mud flat resulted with the utilization by numerous wading birds. However, due to an abundance of undesirable vegetation, only the open area along the Eastern border of the unit was productive.

During July 2008, the unit was mowed which led to an abundance of natural food germination. Standpipes were replaced in Aug. 2008 to begin catching rain water. Active pumping began on Sept. 23, 2008 and continued through the winter. This unit does not effectively hold water possibly due to leaks in the levee or standpipes. This problem will be addressed after the 2009 drain down.

Vegetation: 2007-2008

Vegetation was predominantly cattail and willows. Mowing was effective in removing a large portion of unwanted vegetation and producing heavy food species germination. Due to the ineffective ability to hold water in this unit, the western border has been overtaken with ragweed and green ash.

Proposed Management Summary for 2009 - 2010

In anticipation of continuous problems with holding water in this unit, it will be managed for rail habitat during 2009. The western border will be mowed to maintain early succession. The eastern border will be left alone to allow for cattails to mature. This unit will hold water year round with periodic pumping. It is likely that only the area along the eastern levee will retain water thus providing some rail habitat.

Unit Name: Yates; MS Unit 5

Acres: 59

Summary: 2007-2008

Unit 5 has 3 standpipes along the eastern border and a water valve in the northwestern corner. In 2007, the standpipes were left in allowing rain water to collect producing the most favorable moist soil unit for waterfowl at the Yate's tract. During the late winter/early spring in 2008, mallards were observed utilizing the habitat (at that time, no surveys were performed).

A slow drain was implemented during March in to provide adequate mud flats for migrating shorebirds. During July of 2008, the unit was mowed. In Aug. 2008, the standpipes were replaced to catch rainwater and in Sept. active pumping began. On Nov.12, 2008 this unit was considered full and monitoring will continue throughout the winter.

Vegetation: 2007-2008

Vegetation was predominantly cattails, green ash, and willow trees. There were some open areas which had good food production for waterfowl.

Proposed Management Summary for 2009 - 2010

MAY 15 - JULY 1	Slow draw-down to expose for shorebirds
JULY 1 - OCT 15	Mowing, disking
OCT 15 - APR 1	Slow flood

A slow drain will begin mid-season around May 2009 with a complete draw down in the summer to allow soil to dry for disking and seed germination. A shallow flood will begin around Oct. 2009, increasing throughout Dec. 2009 until a preferred water depth of 2.3 ft. is reached.

Unit Name: Yates; MS Unit 6

Acres: 35

Summary: 2007-2008

Unit 6 has a ½ pipe drain located in the northwestern corner water valve in the southeastern corner. In 2007, the boards were left in allowing rain water to

collect producing the most favorable moist soil unit for waterfowl at the Yate's tract. During the late winter/early spring in 2008, mallards were observed utilizing the habitat (at that time, no surveys were performed).

A slow drain was implemented during March in to provide adequate mud flats for migrating shorebirds; however, due to beaver activity it wasn't drained until June 2008. The beaver dam was removed in June. During July of 2008, the unit was mowed. In Oct. 2008, the boards were replaced to catch rainwater.

Vegetation: 2007-2008

Vegetation was predominantly cattails, green ash, and willow trees. There were some open areas which had good food production for waterfowl.

Proposed Management Summary for 2009 - 2010

JULY 1 – AUG 15	Slow draw-down
AUG 15 - OCT 15	Mowing, disking
NOV 1 – LATE WINTER	Slow flood

A late season drain down in mid summer 2009 with a complete draw down in the late summer to allow soil to dry for disking and seed germination. A shallow flood will begin Nov. 2009, increasing throughout the winter providing habitat for late winter, early spring migration.

Unit Name: Yates; MS Unit 7

Acres: 85

Summary: 2007-2008

Unit 7 has 4 standpipes along the western border and a water valve in the southeastern corner. In 2007, the standpipes were left in allowing rain water to collect water. A slow drain was implemented during March in to provide adequate mud flats for migrating shorebirds. During July of 2008, the unit was mowed. In Oct. 2008, the standpipes were replaced to catch rainwater with 3 days of actively pumping water.

Vegetation: 2007-2008

Vegetation was predominantly cattails and willow trees. There were some open areas which had good food production for waterfowl.

Proposed Management Summary for 2009 - 2010

JULY 1 – AUG 15	Slow draw-down
AUG 15 - OCT 15	Mowing, disking
NOV 1 – LATE WINTER	Slow flood

A late season drain down in mid summer 2009 with a complete draw down in the late summer to allow soil to dry for disking and seed germination. A shallow flood will begin Nov. 2009, increasing throughout the winter providing habitat for late winter, early spring migration.

LOWER CANE UNIT: COOPERATIVE FARMING MOIST SOIL UNITS

Red River NWR has a cooperative farming agreement with Elton Kennedy Farms. All of the moist soil units at Lower Cane were farmed by Kennedy Farms during 2008.

Unit Name: Lower Cane; MS 1

Acres: 94

Summary: 2008

Unit 1 was planted in rice. No rice was left in this field. The 10% will be left in unit 4 for waterfowl. Rice levees were repaired in December of 2008 to catch rain water.

Vegetation: 2008

Rice

Unit Name: Lower Cane; MS 2

Acres: 107

Summary: 2008

Unit 2 was planted in rice. No rice was left in this field. Rice levees were repaired in November of 2008 to catch rain water.

Vegetation: 2008

Rice

Unit Name: Lower Cane; MS 3

Acres: 67

Summary: 2008

Unit 3 was planted in rice. The 10% will be left in unit 4 for waterfowl and will be flooded by the farmer. Rice levees were repaired in November of 2008 to catch rain water.

Vegetation: 2008

Rice

Unit Name: Lower Cane; MS 4

Acres: 43

Summary: 2008

Unit 4 was planted in rice. 10% of rice was left in this unit for waterfowl. Rice levees were repaired in November of 2008.

Vegetation: 2008

Rice

Unit Name: Lower Cane; MS 5

Acres: 146

Summary: 2008

Unit 5 was planted in soybean. This unit was not flooded during the winter.

Vegetation: 2008

Soybean

Unit Name: Lower Cane; MS 6

Acres: 106

Summary: 2008

Unit 6 was planted in millet. The millet will not be harvested. The agreement was to leave 100% for waterfowl and for this unit to be flooded.

Vegetation: 2008

Millet

Unit Name: Lower Cane; MS 7

Acres: 59

Summary: 2008

Unit 7 was planted in millet. The millet will not be harvested. The agreement was to leave 100% for waterfowl and for this unit to be flooded.

Vegetation: 2008

Millet

Unit Name: Lower Cane; MS 8

Acres: 49

Summary: 2008

Unit 8 was planted in millet. The millet will not be harvested. The agreement was to leave 100% for waterfowl and for this unit to be flooded.

Vegetation: 2008

Millet

Unit Name: Lower Cane; MS 9

Acres: 61

Summary: 2008

Unit 9 was planted in millet. The millet will not be harvested. The agreement was to leave 100% for waterfowl and for this unit to be flooded.

Vegetation: 2008

Millet

Unit Name: Lower Cane; MS 10

Acres: 87

Summary: 2008

Unit 10 was planted in millet. The millet will not be harvested. The agreement was to leave 100% for waterfowl and for this unit to be flooded.

Vegetation: 2008

Millet

Unit Name: Lower Cane; MS 11

Acres: 139

Summary: 2008

Unit 11 was planted in millet. The millet will not be harvested. The agreement was to leave 100% for waterfowl and for this unit to be flooded.

Vegetation: 2008

Millet

Unit Name: Lower Cane; MS 12

Acres: 93

Summary: 2008

Unit 12 was planted in millet. The millet will not be harvested. The agreement was to leave 100% for waterfowl and for this unit to be flooded.

Vegetation: 2008

Millet





Lower Cane

